

United States who turned his attention to birds other than those of North America. It is prefaced by a well-written sketch of Cassin's life and work (prepared by Mr. Witmer Stone) and gives a portrait of that excellent ornithologist, whose personal acquaintance Sclater had the pleasure of making when he visited Philadelphia in 1856! The papers included are entirely of local interest.

#### 110. Dubois' 'Synopsis Avium.'

[Synopsis Avium. Nouveau Manuel d'Ornithologie par Alphonse Dubois. Fasc. IX., X. Royal 8vo. Brussels, 1901-2. 6 francs per livraison.]

In these two parts of the 'Synopsis Avium' (see Ibis, 1902, p. 338) the enumeration of the Oscinine series is continued to its end, and the few Pseudoscines conclude the volume, which contains altogether 729 pages. The species recognised in it are 9417 in number. The Introduction, Titlepage, and Contents of the first volume of the 'Synopsis' are contained in the tenth livraison.

Dr. Dubois has adopted Sundevall's division of the Class Aves into "Gymnopædes" and "Ptilopædes." The first of these sections is now concluded; the Ptilopædes will be treated of in the second volume.

#### 111. Finsch on the Zosteropidæ.

[Das Tierreich. Lieferung 15. Zosteropidæ, bearbeitet von Dr. Otto Finsch. 56 pp. Berlin: Friedländer, 1901.]

By some mischance the 15th Lieferung of 'Das Tierreich,' containing Dr. Finsch's synopsis of the Zosteropidæ, which is dated March 1901, has only lately come to our notice. It was quite appropriate that this group of birds should be worked up in the Leyden Museum, which contains an excellent, if not unrivalled, series of Zosteropine forms.

After an account of the literature of the subject, and two pages of general introduction, Dr. Finsch proceeds to consider the family, and wisely decides to allow only three valid genera—*Zosterops*, *Pseudozosterops*, and *Lophozosterops*. To typical *Zosterops* the author assigns no less than 138 species,

which are divided into some 20 sections. *Pseudozosterops* comprises only 3 species, from the Sunda Islands, and *Lophozosterops* only 2, from the same part of the world.

The Zosteropidæ are spread over the greater part of the tropical portion of the Old World, extending from Senegambia to the Fijis, and from Japan (*Z. japonica*) and Amoorland (*Z. erythropleura*) on the north to Tasmania and New Zealand on the south. Dr. Finsch considers them to be a family of nine-primaried Oscines allied to the Dicæidæ and Mniotiltidæ.

112. *Hellmayr on two new Brazilian Birds.*

[Beschreibung von zwei neuen brasilianischen Vögeln. Von C. E. Hellmayr. Verhandl. k.-k. zool.-bot. Ges. Wien, 1902, pp. 95-98.]

*Attila nattereri* and *Rhamphocænus sticturus*, both from Matto Grosso (Natterer), are described as new.

113. *Hellmayr on a new Thryophilus.*

[Noch einige Worte über *Thryophilus*. Von C. E. Hellmayr. Verhandl. k.-k. zool.-bot. Ges. Wien, 1902, pp. 169-170.]

The author describes *Thryophilus baroni* from Northern Peru as a new species.

114. *Hinde on the Game-birds of Masailand.*

[The Last of the Masai. By S. L. Hinde and Hildegard Hinde. 1 vol., pp. 180. London, 1901.]

Mr. Hinde and his wife have put together a well-written and excellently illustrated account of the Masai of British East Africa, among whom the former has been "Resident and Collector" for several years. The Masai have now "fallen from their high estate" and are rapidly dwindling in numbers, so that Mr. and Mrs. Hinde have done a good deed in recording, before it was too late, their most extraordinary habits and customs. Mr. Hinde also gives us "Field-Notes on the Game of East Africa," which are mostly concerned with mammals; but a few pages are devoted to the Pigeons, Water-Ibises, Bustards, Francolins, Guinea-fowl, and other "game-birds" of Masailand; while the following passage on the recent change of habits in the Oxpecker (*Buphaga erythrorhyncha*) is worthy of notice:—

“One of the most remarkable instances of the change of habits in wild birds is shown in the case of the common Rhinoceros-bird, which formerly fed on ticks and the other parasites infesting game and domestic animals. It was not infrequent for an animal suffering from a sore to be so badly probed by these birds that it died as a result. Since the cattle-plague destroyed the immense herds in Ukambani and nearly all the sheep and goats were consumed during the famine, the Rhinoceros-bird, deprived of its former food, has become carnivorous, and at the present time any animal not constantly watched is liable to be killed by it. Perfectly healthy animals have their ears eaten down to the bone, and holes torn in their backs and in the femoral regions.”

115. *Le Souëf's Visit to the Furneaux Islands.*

[A Visit to the Furneaux Group of Islands. By D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S. Vict. Nat. xviii. pp. 181-188.]

Mr. D. Le Souëf, who, we are informed, has now succeeded his father in the Secretaryship of the Zoological Gardens at Melbourne, has given the field-naturalists of Victoria an interesting description of his visit to the Furneaux group of islands in Bass' Straits. Here is the well-known home of the Mutton-bird (*Puffinus tenuirostris*), besides “rookeries” of the Gannet (*Sula serrator*) and White-breasted Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax gouldi*), with nesting-grounds of many other birds. A list of 54 species “seen and identified” is given.

116. *Loring on Birds from Alaska.*

[Notes on Mammals and Birds observed in Southern Alaska in 1901. By J. Alden Loring. Sixth Ann. Rep. New York Zool. Soc. 1902, p. 145.]

Mr. Loring's journey to Alaska in 1901 was undertaken in order to provide living animals for the Zoological Society's Park at New York, to which he is attached as “Field-Agent.” But at his principal station at Cook Inlet, on the southern coast of Alaska, and elsewhere he managed to make observations on certain mammals and birds that he met with, which are recorded in this paper. The birds noticed

and for the most part thoroughly identified were 46 in number, of well-known species, 15 being Passeres.

117. *Madarász on Birds from the Solomon Islands.*

[Beiträge zur Ornithologie der Salomon-Inseln, mit der Beschreibung von drei neuen Arten. Von Dr. Julius v. Madarász. Természeti Füzetek, xxv. pp. 350-351, tab. xvii.]

A small collection made by Graf Rudolf Festetich on the east coast of Bougainville Island and presented to the Hungarian National Museum is described, the birds being referred to 9 species, three of which are said to be new—*Cyclopsittacus festetichi*, *C. purpuratus*, and *Megaloprepia salomonis*. *C. purpuratus* is figured.

118. *Mellersh on the Birds of Gloucestershire.*

[A Treatise on the Birds of Gloucestershire, with a reference list of all the species known to have appeared in the County. By W. L. Mellersh. Roy. 8vo. Gloucester & London, 1902. Pp. i-viii & 1-112. Price 5s. net.]

This book, which we have read with great pleasure and profit, does not profess to furnish a complete account of the birds of the county, nor to discuss the details of their occurrence in regular sequence; but it aims at informing the reader, firstly, of the different areas into which Gloucestershire may be divided, and, secondly, of the effects which may be produced by the varying nature of the country upon birds and their habits. Four such areas are proposed: the rocky, poor, north-western portion, with the pastures surrounding it; the well-watered Severn Valley; the broad pastures of "the Vale," from Evesham to Bristol; and the elevated downs of the Cotswolds, with their scattered woods. The habitual residents in each of these, the migratory and introduced species, and the stragglers are all carefully considered. The protection of the rarer forms is discussed, while a glossary of local names, a bibliography, and a reference list are added, with a map and six plates.

Gloucestershire is rich in birds, and of some 400 species allowed to be British can lay claim to 270. Of these, the Ring-Ousel, Crossbill, Starling, Kite, Buzzard, Pheasant,

Stone-Curlew, and Sheld-Drake are the most interesting; while the subject of Duck Decoys is hardly less so.

### 119. *Millais on Surface-feeding Ducks.*

[The Natural History of British Surface-feeding Ducks. With 6 photogravures, 41 coloured plates, and 25 other illustrations. By J. G. Millais, F.Z.S. Longmans; folio, 1902. Price £6 6s. net.]

The Ducks, as many of us know, are a favourite group with the author of this handsome volume. Mr. Millais, as he tells us, has been engaged in the study of Ducks for the past twenty years. As he is thoroughly conversant not only with the bodily structure and the various plumages of his specimens, but also with the habits and manners of the living birds, and has, moreover, the advantage of being an artist of no mean order, we should expect good results from his labours, and are not, we think, disappointed.

But a small portion, however, of his great subject is comprised in the present volume, which treats only of some of the "Surface-feeding" Ducks. It relates, in fact, to ten species, namely, the Mallard, the Gadwall, two Wigeons, the Shoveler, the Garganey, three Teals, and the Pintail. All these birds are most elaborately discussed and described, and the changes of plumage undergone by them in both sexes and at all stages are clearly pointed out and illustrated in a long series of figures. Their poses and attitudes in life are mostly shown by figures in uncoloured plates and others introduced in the text, which, we must confess, please us more than the photographic gravures intended to shew the changes of plumage. At the same time we agree that the latter are well planned to prove the results obtained by diligent study of this difficult part of the subject. The large plates taken by the facile pencils of the author and Mr. Thorburn, and printed in colours by the three-colour process, are likewise extremely effective, although Mr. Millais allows that this process has not yet been brought to perfection.

We need hardly say that besides the changes of plumage, to which special attention is paid, every other part of the life-history of these ten favoured Ducks is amply described

in this fascinating volume, which should be found in the library of every naturalist.

Mr. Millais, we may remark in conclusion, is of opinion that there are really no structural differences sufficient to separate the genera *Mareca*, *Dafila*, and *Chaulelasmus* from the Mallard, and that these so-called genera should be re-united to the genus *Anas*. In this view we are inclined to agree with him.

120. *Milligan on Birds from Western Australia.*

[Report on the Kimberley Exploring Expedition. Appendix F. Birds. By A. W. Milligan. May 1902.]

Mr. A. W. Milligan, Honorary Consulting Ornithologist of the Western Australian Museum, Perth, reports on the birds collected by the Kimberley Exploring Expedition. They were 43 in number and are referred to 19 species, 11 of which are new to the Perth Museum. Amongst them are three examples of a new Grass-Wren, proposed to be named *Amytis housii*, after Dr. F. M. House, the Naturalist of the expedition.

121. *North on the Insectivorous Birds of New South Wales.*

[A List of the Insectivorous Birds of New South Wales. By Alfred J. North, C.M.Z.S. Agric. Gazette of New South Wales, vols. xi., xii., xiii., 1900-1902.]

The 'Agricultural Gazette' of New South Wales is issuing a series of articles upon the Insectivorous Birds of that Colony, prepared by Mr. A. J. North, the Ornithologist of the Australian Museum, than whom there can be no better authority on such a subject. They will serve well to afford a better knowledge of these useful birds to the agriculturist. Coloured illustrations of some of the species are given.

122. *North on Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds.*

[Nests and Eggs of Birds found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania. By A. J. North. Part II. Sydney, April 1902.]

The second part of this valuable work (see *Ibis*, 1902, p. 156) has now reached us. It continues the account of the nests and eggs of the Bower-birds—one of the most

peculiar and attractive families of the Australian ornithology; and then proceeds to the Orioles, Drongos, Shrike-Thrushes (*Collyriocincla*), and Campophagidæ. Besides the coloured plates of eggs, neat text-figures of the nests are also often given, and the letterpress is full of interesting particulars.

### 123. Oates's 'Catalogue of Eggs.'

[Catalogue of the Collection of Birds' Eggs in the British Museum (Natural History). Vol. II. Carinatae (Charadriiformes—Strigiformes). By Eugene W. Oates. London, 1902. Pp. 400, pls. 15. Price 30s.]

The second volume of Mr. Oates's 'Catalogue of Eggs' has been carried out on exactly the same lines as the first, the system employed in which we have already described (see *Ibis*, 1901, p. 731). It contains a list of the eggs of the species of Waders, Herons, Ducks, Pelicans, Hawks, and Owls represented in the National Collection—that is, of the ten Orders from Charadriiformes to Strigiformes inclusive, according to the arrangement of the 'Hand-list,' the system and nomenclature of which are strictly adhered to. Altogether 14,998 specimens of eggs are catalogued in this volume and referred to 726 species. The Crowley Bequest, which has been received since the first volume of the Catalogue was issued, has added very largely to the series and has supplied a great number of desiderata, especially as regards Australian species.

An Appendix of 36 pp. records many additions and corrections to the first volume. We are informed by it that the egg hitherto referred to *Anarhynchus frontalis* (figured as such by Mr. Harting, P. Z. S. 1874, pl. lx.) does not belong to that species, but probably to *Thinocorys novæ-zealandiæ*\*. The true egg of *Anarhynchus* is now described from specimens in the Crowley Collection obtained by Mr. Potts.

We heartily congratulate Mr. Oates on the excellent and methodical character of his work. We suppose that at least two more volumes will be required for the Passeres. When

[We should prefer to reserve our opinion on this subject, having always understood that Mr. Harting's egg, one of three taken by Mr. J. R. Cook, a most careful observer, was unimpeachable. Sir W. Buller's description appears to be from Mr. Potts.—EDD.]

these have been completed, a general treatise on the Oology of Birds might well be based upon this great mass of material.

124. *Oberholser on Humming-birds from Ecuador and Colombia.*

[Catalogue of a Collection of Humming-birds from Ecuador and Colombia. By Harry C. Oberholser. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xxiv. pp. 309-342, 1902.]

In this journal (Ibis, 1901, pp. 300, 458, 699; 1902, pp. 59, 207) we recently published an account of the very remarkable collection of birds made by Messrs. Claud Hamilton and Walter Goodfellow during their journey through Colombia and Ecuador in 1898 and 1899. The Humming-birds were not included in Mr. Goodfellow's memoir, because the whole of the specimens of that family of birds had been parted with to the United States National Museum. With the possible exception of that of Baron (see Nov. Zool. vol. i. p. 43), Messrs. Hamilton and Goodfellow's series of these birds "is probably the finest single collection ever made, comprising as it does 1136 specimens, almost all in fine condition and accompanied by proper data." Mr. Oberholser, to whom their examination has been entrusted, refers them to 109 species and subspecies.

The author follows the arrangement of Mr. Hartert in the 'Tierreich,' and gives many useful remarks besides the collectors' notes. He describes as new:—*Topaza pella pamprepta*, from the Rio Napo; *Boissonneaua flavescens tinochlora*, from West Ecuador; *Heliangelus exortis soderstromi*, from Corazon, Ecuador; and *Zodalia thaumasta*, from Chillo, Ecuador. Besides these, other species represented in the collection are rare and of much interest.

125. *Palmer on Legislation for Birds in the United States.*

[Legislation for the Protection of Birds other than Game-Birds. By T. S. Palmer. Bull. U.S. Dept. Agric., Div. of Biol. Surv., No. 12, Revised Edition, 1902.]

Mr. Palmer tells us that at least twelve States of the Union have passed new laws for the protection of birds since 1900, while others have amended, re-enacted, or codified their



statutes, until there are but few exceptions to the rule. The author has recast the part of his work on the use of birds for millinery purposes, and has subjoined a chapter on the possession and sale of birds. Material additions have been made in other portions of the pamphlet, and a table is given of the dates of the laws, together with new diagrams and other improvements. The Federal Laws, the several State Laws, and those of Canada are given in full (see *Ibis*, 1901, p. 140).

126. *Richmond on new Generic Terms for Birds.*

[List of Generic Terms proposed for Birds during the Years 1890 to 1900, inclusive, to which are added names omitted by Waterhouse in his 'Index Generum Avium.' By Charles W. Richmond. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xiv. pp. 663-729, 1902.]

Mr. Waterhouse's excellent 'Index Generum Avium' provides a most useful list of the generic names proposed in the Class of Birds from the time of Linnæus to the middle of 1889. Mr. Richmond supplements this work by giving us a list of the generic names proposed since that date up to the end of 1900, and at the same time by adding certain names omitted in the former list. The newly instituted names are 475 in number, and those overlooked by Mr. Waterhouse are 200, so that altogether 675 are enumerated in the present work. In Mr. Richmond's List, not only is an exact reference given to the volume in which each name was published, but the typical species is designated, while the family to which the genus is referable and an explanation of the term employed are also added; so that the paper is most useful and complete, and will be of great value to working ornithologists.

The List ends with a catalogue of the generic terms contained in it, arranged under the heads of the families to which they belong.

127. *Seth-Smith on Parrakeets.*

[Parrakeets; being a practical Handbook to those Species kept in Captivity. By D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. Part I. Pp. 1-40; 4 coloured plates. Royal 8vo. London: R. H. Porter. Price 6s. net.]

Mr. Seth-Smith sends us the first number of his new book

on Parrots in captivity, which will, no doubt, receive great support from our friends the aviculturists. It is nicely printed and got up, and contains four well-drawn coloured plates by Mr. Goodchild, besides some figures in the text. Full particulars concerning the habits of the birds in captivity are supplied.

128. *Sharpe on the Birds of the 'Southern Cross' Expedition.*

[Report on the Collections of Natural History made in the Antarctic Regions during the Voyage of the 'Southern Cross.' London, 1902. 344 pp.; 53 pls. Price 40s.]

The Report on the collections made in the Antarctic Seas during Borchgrevink's expedition in the 'Southern Cross' (1898-99) contains a chapter on the Birds by Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, illustrated by 3 plates and numerous text-figures. The Zoologist of the expedition was Nicolai Hanson, who unfortunately died in October 1899 at Cape Adair. The selected extracts from his diary, relating chiefly to Mammals and Birds, will be read with interest.

The birds treated of by Dr. Sharpe belong to 24 species—3 Penguins, 11 Petrels, 5 Albatroses, 1 Tern, 1 Gull, 2 Skuas, and 1 Cormorant. The exact localities of the specimens of all of them are carefully given, and much information from various sources is added, particularly in the case of the Emperor and Adelia Penguins. It appears that the Emperor Penguin was not found breeding, and therefore no specimen of its egg was obtained. The supposed egg of this species in Mr. J. H. Walter's collection, if authentic (as is apparently the case, though it is not known who took it), therefore remains unique. We hope that the new Antarctic Expedition now in progress will bring us back more information on this subject.

129. *Shelley's 'Birds of Africa.'*

[The Birds of Africa. By G. E. Shelley, F.Z.S., F.R.G.S. Vol. III. London: Porter, 1902. 8vo. Pp. 276. Price £2 2s. net.]

We have now to record the issue of the third volume of Capt. Shelley's new work on the Birds of Africa. It com-

mences with the remainder of the Pipits, which were left unfinished at the close of the second volume (see *Ibis*, 1901, p. 146), and then proceeds to the Larks (*Alaudidæ*), which are numerous in Africa. Capt. Shelley recognizes 74 species, which he refers to 16 genera. Here we find two new generic terms—*Pinarocorys* for *Alauda nigricans* Sund. and *A. erythropygia* Strickl., and *Botha* for *B. difficilis*, a new species from the Orange River Colony based on a single specimen in the British Museum. Two new Larks, moreover, are *Calandrella starki* from Damaraland and *C. sclateri* from Great Namaqualand. We agree with Capt. Shelley in considering the alleged habitat of *Otocorys berlepschi* ("Caffraria") very doubtful.

The rest of the present volume is devoted to the Fringillidæ, of which 76 species are recorded as Æthiopian. These the author divides into two subfamilies—Emberizinæ and Fringillinæ. In the latter group *Serinus* holds a prominent place, being represented by 31 species, while *Passer* with 18 is also well to the front.

*Fringillaria readi*, from Natal, and *Serinus marshalli*, from St. Helena, are described as new species.

The volume is illustrated by 14 excellent coloured plates, drawn by Grönvold, in which the following species are figured:—*Mirafra gilletti*, *M. nævia*, *M. pæcilsterna*, *M. fischeri*, *M. athi*, *M. hypermetra*, *M. intercedens*, *M. albicauda*, *M. buckleyi*, *M. collaris*, *Pyrrhulauda nigriceps*, *Ammomanes samharensis*, *Tephrocorys blanfordi*, *Botha difficilis*, *Calandrella starki*, *C. sclateri*, *Emberiza poliopleura*, *Fringillaria impetuani*, *Chrysomitris totta*, *Serinus capistratus*, *S. hartlaubi*, *S. albifrons*, *Poliospiza gularis*, *P. reichardi*, *Passer castanopterus*, *P. shelleyi*, *P. euchlora*, and *Petronia flavigula*.

### 130. *Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen on Austrian and Hungarian Birds.*

[Ornithologische Kollektaneen aus Oesterreich - Ungarn und dem Occupations-Gebiete. Von Viktor Ritter von Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen. Ornithol. Monatschr. xxvii. pp. 137-142.]

In this short paper are given remarks on the occurrence

in Austria, Hungary, and the Occupation-Territory of several Falconidæ, *Syrnium uralense*, *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, *Pastor roseus*, and various Grouse, Ducks, &c.

131. *Van Kempen on Birds from the Pas-de-Calais.*

[Oiseaux dont la capture est rare ou fortuite dans les Départements du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais conservés dans la Collection Van Kempen, à Saint-Omer. Par Van Kempen. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, xxvii. pp. 5-18]

A list of species, with remarks on the places of capture, and dates. Several which we should hardly consider rare are included, and varieties of some are recorded.

132. *Zarudny and Härms on new Birds from Western Asia.*

[Neue Vogelarten. Von N. Zarudny und M. Härms. Ornithol. Monatsb. 1902, pp. 49-54.]

Messrs. Zarudny and Härms describe *Scops semenowi* from Persian Beloochistan and several subspecies—*Neophron percnopterus rubripersonatus* from Southern Persia, *Passer ammodendri korejewi* from Eastern Transcaspia, *Otocorys penicillata iranica* from Northern Persia, and *Parus communis korejewi* from Turkestan. The writers promise us a book on the birds of Eastern Persia.

XLIII.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors":—

SIRS,—In my article on Audouin's Gull (*Larus audouini*) (above, p. 493) there is an error as regards the localities of the specimens of that bird in the Museum of Florence, which are stated to be "all from the island of Mal di Ventre." It is the eggs only which were taken on that island. The specimens are all from the open sea or islands of the Mediterranean, except one, which was procured at Piombino, near Leghorn, being the second example recorded from the mainland of Italy.

The Florence Museum now contains ten specimens of this Gull, two of which are young in down, obtained in May last from the islets on the south-western coast of Sardinia.

Yours &c.,

Cascina Vecchia,  
Saltino, Florence.

COUNT E. ARRIGONI DEGLI ODDI.

28th July, 1902.

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SIRS,—I have been requested to write a short account of my visit to the Casquets Lighthouse on Tuesday, May 13th, on the morning of which day a large number of birds met their death by striking the lantern.

In company with two of the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House, I, as a guest, visited the Casquets in the Trinity yacht 'Irene.' We left the ship in one of the boats, and landed on the rock at about 10 A.M. for the purpose of inspection. I explored the surroundings, and found an enormous quantity of dead birds; many of them were skeletons only, but there must have been at least two or three hundred that were quite fresh. Almost all were near the foot of the lighthouse, and the lighthouse-keepers informed me that "early that morning a large flock of small birds, with a few Doves, had passed. Very few of the Doves had struck the lantern, as they seemed to have been more cautious than the small birds, a great number of which had met their death, for over two hundred had been picked up in the gallery outside the lantern." I found that all the small birds belonged to a species of Flycatcher. At the first casual glance I took some of them for Robins, but on closer inspection I at once noticed that they were all Flycatchers. About a quarter, or possibly a third, of the lot had red breasts, and I cannot better describe them than in the first line of Seebohm's account of the Red-breasted Flycatcher, where he says: "This pretty little species is like a miniature Robin in general appearance." I should have said that the breast was a little more orange, not quite so dark as in the Robin, but the picture of *Muscicapa parva* in Lord Lilford's 'Birds of the British Islands' (vol. ii. p. 88) at

once enabled me to identify the bird. Together with one of the sailors, I collected a number of examples and put them in the boat, but I did not go to the ship with them immediately, and when I asked for them on my return, I was told, to my great annoyance, that they had all been made into a pie! It was too late to get more, so I came away without any specimen after all. The weather was fine and clear, with light haze at times; this the lighthouse-keepers said was the case when all the birds came. The wind was E.N.E., light, force 2 to 3; but I was told by one of the officers that, as a fact, the wind was variable during the night.

Writing to one of our party, Mr. Eagle Clarke says:—  
 “I am much obliged for your information about the big migration night at the Casquets; it is most interesting and important, for about the same time great numbers of Whitethroats, Sedge-Warblers, and Willow-Warblers were killed at St. Catherine’s Point and at the Needles.”

Yours &c.,

R. W. LLEWELLYN.

Baglan, Britonferry.  
 23rd June, 1902.

[In reference to this communication, we may say that it is hard to believe that a flock of Red-breasted Flycatchers can have occurred on migration at the Casquets. This bird is quite a South-east European species, and does not become really abundant until the Balkan Peninsula is reached. It is a pity that no specimens were preserved in order to settle the question, but our opinion is that the birds in question were probably Robins, which are of frequent occurrence on lighthouses.—EDD.]

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SIRS,—In the autumn of 1896 I purchased eight young Gouldian Finches in the grey and green nestling plumage, but was only successful in bringing through their first moult three of them, all of which proved to belong to the black-faced variety, *Poëphila gouldiæ*. Of these three, one died in 1898 and a second in 1900, the remaining bird living in

captivity until the night of July 26th, 1902, when, just as it was completing its moult, it also died.

My experience, and that of many other bird-keepers, with regard to this species of *Poëphila*, is that it is by no means gifted with longevity: the greater number of imported Gouldian Finches die in the first or second year of captivity. For a specimen therefore to retain its health in one of my flight-cages for six years seems to me exceptional.

However, the longevity of my Gouldian Finch was by no means the most interesting fact in connexion with it. What astonished and interested me most was that from about its third year (in my possession) its colouring deepened very noticeably with each succeeding moult. Now, at its death, it was so dissimilar from the normal *P. gouldiæ* that, if shot wild, nobody would hesitate to regard it as a very distinct species. The following is a description of the final colouring:—

Entire head, throat, and breast glossy blackish indigo or blue-black; a few feathers in the middle of the hind-breast with blue fringes; back of crown slightly olivaceous, grading into the deep olive-green of the nape and back. Feathers of hinder back with more or less broad grass-green borders; feathers of rump blue-black, fringed with peacock-green or blue; tail blue-black. The wings shew no marked difference from the normal type, but the breast is dull ochreous rather than bright saffron-yellow, and is disfigured by a vague central longitudinal broad olive streak and by similar flanking streaks. Between the blue-black breast and the abdomen is a line of copper-reddish; the vent is white. Beak white, with tip and commissure claret-coloured; irides blackish; feet pale buffish, toes pale pinkish flesh-coloured, claws pale buffish.

Among Thrushes and Skylarks which have lived long in captivity melanochroism is not uncommon. I well remember one Song-Thrush, the property of an old Irishman who used to keep a bird-shop in Keppel Street, Chelsea, which was quite black. Its owner informed me that he had kept the bird for sixteen years, and although it had become quite a cripple from old age, he had not the heart to kill it. He

said that when first caught it was coloured like any other Song-Thrush, but had become darker at each moult during the later years of its captivity.

Now, in my experience (and I have kept many examples of both) an English Song-Thrush, even in captivity, is not by any means such a long-lived bird as the common Blackbird: therefore for one to live to the astonishing age of sixteen years is very exceptional\*.

Is melanochroism in old age the result of unusual constitutional vigour, as leucochroism seems to be of constitutional weakness? There is no doubt that white and pied varieties of birds are the result either of in-breeding or of failing strength: they undoubtedly become accentuated with age, as I have noted in the case of all which I have possessed (at various times), and notably in the case of a Crimson-eared Waxbill (*Estrilda phœnicotis*) which I have had for six or seven years, and which at the present time has the greater part of its flight-feathers white.

The abnormal variety of *P. gouldiæ* described above will be presented to the Natural History Museum. It has been fed upon white millet, spray-millet, and canary-seed; therefore the change of colour is not due to unnatural feeding.

Yours &c.,

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124 Beckenham Road,

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28th July, 1902.

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SIRS,—In the 'Ibis' for July, when treating of the birds collected by Mr. R. M. Hawker on the White Nile, Mr. Ogilvie-Grant remarked (pp. 462-463) on two male Ruffs in a peculiar state of plumage. The peculiarity consisted in their heads and necks being more or less completely white. I think that it may be worth mentioning that in the south of Spain, where in certain winters Ruffs are fairly numerous, I have frequently noticed this phase of plumage, exactly as described by Mr. Grant in birds from

\* I consider seven years in captivity a very good age for a Blackbird; this is probably twice as long as it would live in freedom.